

THE DIVINE RIGHT OF MISSIONS

HENRY C. MABIE

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The divine right of missions

THE DIVINE RIGHT OF MISSIONS

Or, CHRISTIANITY THE WORLD-
RELIGION AND THE RIGHT OF
THE CHURCH TO PROPAGATE IT

A Study
in Comparative Religion

By ✓
HENRY C. MABIE

Philadelphia
The Griffith & Rowland Press

Boston

Chicago

Atlanta

New York

St. Louis

Dallas

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AMERICAN BAPTIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY

Published May, 1908

From the Society's own Press

Preface

THIS essay was originally prepared in two parts: the former part for the Congress of Arts and Sciences of the St. Louis Exposition in 1904. That paper was entitled, "Elements in Christianity which Adapt it to be the Universal and Absolute Religion." The latter part was an article in a symposium on foreign missions, which appeared in the "American Journal of Theology," Chicago, in 1907, in answer to the question, "Has Christianity the Moral Right to Supplant the Ethnic Faiths?" By the kind favor of the editors I have permission to use the articles, rewrought in this form for a wider use.

These two studies in the mind of the writer were really one study, the latter growing out of the former, though originally presented in different connections.

They belong together. Each finds a larger completeness in the other. They are therefore with slight reconstruction and some additional matter here combined as one discussion, and offered as a brief apologetic for the legitimacy of the extension of Christianity into all lands—a matter which in one form or another in our time is peculiarly engrossing the public mind.

That the essay may help to commend that enterprise which filled the heart and was last on the lips of the divine Master prior to the Ascension, is the prayer of the author.

Boston, April 1, 1908.

H. C. M.

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THE DIVINE RIGHT OF MISSIONS

Part II

Christianity the World Religion

IS Christianity the world religion? The answer to that question will be the answer to many others. This is a day of wide and varied study of comparative religion, a matter broad as mankind, enduring as time, and profound as the needs of man. The subject is native to every country, inwoven in every epoch of history, and connected with every type of thought. "Religion is the one elemental and eternal thing in man"; indeed, man has been defined as "an animate being with religion."

Vain would be an attempt in this essay to deal with more than aspects of the broad theme. It is ever wise to recognize elements of truth in any phase of religion in whatsoever form the religious instinct has expressed itself, or from whatever source the truth may have come.¹ Every form of religion, even the crudest fetichism, gives utterance to some deep hunger of the soul, and so hints a thought of God. Every religion has an element of value, and its phenomena deserve to be carefully registered and pondered; for example, animism even at its lowest holds a belief in the existence of a human spirit, in the antagonism of spirits good and bad, in the possibility of some sort of communion of spirits, and the future life of spirits. The savage idolater may not always worship the symbol before which he

Values
in all
Religions

¹ Doubtless many of those truer elements which are found in the ethnic religions are survivals of a primitive but lost revelation. For example, an ancient representation of Vishnu in Hinduism presented a figure with a serpent coiled about it, but with the serpent's head beneath Vishnu's heel. Can there be any doubt of the biblical origin of that conception?

bows. He may simply try to realize and localize the spirit which he fears. The rude African who would not complete a bargain with the European trader until he had time to go and bring his fetich which he had forgotten, is far more to be commended than the modern nominal Christian who essays to conduct his business apart from his profession of Christ; nay, the African, in loyalty to his untutored conscience, reads a needed lesson to all such as have forgotten that God has the most intimate relation to all business, including one's share in responsibility for corporate acts, be they good or bad.

In the Rig-Veda of the Hindus are found evidences of the sovereignty and omnipresence of the Deity, and the ancient religion records many a cry after immortality. Brahmanism with all its grossness is in some respects at least a non-materialistic religion. It seeks to fit the spirit by endless transmigrations for a future life. Buddhism represents a half-truth, viz., that to find blessed-

ness the soul must lose its life. Its fundamental defect is that unlike Christianity, it does not show how through losing its sinful self-life, it may find its diviner life in Christ. And Buddhism has its Kwan Yin, who some think is a survival although in a grotesque form of early traditions of the Christ, and even of the Logos-doctrine of St. John. At all events Kwan Yin is a sort of idealization of the divine mercy such as was not suspected a generation ago as existing in heathen literature or history.

Confucianism deals nobly with the manward duties embraced in the second table of the Mosaic law. It teaches the reform of personal life, some sort of regulation of the family, and the correction of certain social and political abuses. Of course it is agnostic as to God, and yet in the very effort to escape God it substitutes nature and ancestor-worship.

The Zendavesta entertains a dualism of principles embracing the conflict between good and evil, but hoping for ultimate con-

quest of the evil by the good. But each of these systems has disastrously failed to morally elevate the masses of the people who have been its adherents, even after many centuries of trial. And that some of these systems have absolutely corrupted rather than elevated the peoples who have been under their influence is the verdict of thoughtful students of these religions in many lands. There are, to say the least, fatal defects in them all, defects which caricature the Deity, grossly debase their subjects, and in other ways render them insufficient to meet the deeper needs of man, while Christianity alone embraces all the good found in these various systems, with none of their evils.

What I present in the first part of this discussion is a study preliminary to the justification of Christian missions.

For, as Mr. Balfour says of **Preliminary Considerations** theology, so may it be said of missions, that "the decisive battles are fought beyond its frontiers." It is not over

matters purely missionary that the rights of missions are lost or won. The judgments we form upon the special problems of missions are commonly settled for us by our prepossessions—by our general mode of looking at Christianity itself. So in our talk about missions, to use a phrase of Emerson's, "we say what we ought to say," according as we are Christian, modo-Christian, or anti-Christian. At bottom, the problem of Christian missions is only the problem of the extension of Christianity. How aggressively, how discreetly, or in what forms we are to do it, are secondary matters. The human methods whereby Christianity is extended anywhere, always with more or less variation and imperfectness, are the methods of missions.

My present object is to point out in Christianity those characteristics which constitutionally and reasonably commend it to universal trial, and therefore to universal and aggressive propagation.

By Christianity, I mean of course Chris-

tianity as it is in itself, as it came uncorrupted from the hand of its author; Christianity as separated from all those perversions and exaggerations which have become superimposed upon it through the ignorance, narrowness, or perversity of its adherents. I mean Christianity in its irreducible minimum. For such a Christianity we must go back of all historic forms, back of all existing creedal statements, to the apostolic mind in revelation itself.

We now turn to an examination into those elements which adapt it to hold the controlling place which we claim for it, as the true universal and absolute religion.

The first characteristic we note is the emphasis which Christianity puts upon the essential oneness of man. The account of man's creation in Genesis, the implications involved in the act of the dispersion at Babel, the twofold Adamic race headship of mankind, the insistence on the duty of mutual love among all men, and the goal toward

The Religion
of Human
Oneness

which renewed humanity moves in the glorified civic unity of the New Jerusalem, all testify to the divine conception of man as one. That this has been only partially believed and accepted is sadly true. Since the first act of unbelief, logically resulting in the slaying of Abel by Cain his brother, schism and strife have characterized the long story of man's relation to man. The tyranny of the elder over the younger, of the strong over the weak, of kings over subjects, and of caste over caste, has disastrously prevailed until this hour, and is at the root of the wars and woes of society.

The great epochal reforms among men have always turned upon some aspect of man's brotherly duty to his fellow. The passing of the feudal system, the establishment of the Great Charter of England, the Reformation under Luther, the rise of the American Republic, the abolition of slavery, and the freeing of the Western Hemisphere from medieval intolerance and bigotry, all were grounded in a return toward the Bible

conception of the oneness of man. Jesus Christ set forth this deep oneness in this fashion: The Herodians and Pharisees had combined in a plot to ensnare him. They approached the Master with the subtle flattery: "Teacher, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, and carest not for any one; for thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?" (Matt. 22 : 16, 17.) In his answer to this cunning flattery Christ seized upon the initial suggestion: "Thou regardest not the person of men," literally, "Thou lookest not into the face of men." And so he replied: "Shew me the tribute money"—the Roman denarius appointed for the tax. This coin had on its one side the face of Tiberius Cæsar, suggestive of civic responsibility; and on the obverse side the figure of a priest, suggesting religious relations. Looking then full upon the face of Cæsar, Jesus said: "You tell me I do not look upon the face

of men. Whose face is this upon which I am now looking, and the superscription whose?" They say unto him, "Cæsar's." Then said Jesus: "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's"—the things which have Cæsar's imprint on them, "and unto God the things which are God's"—the things which have his imprint on them (ver. 21). Thus Christ looked upon man's face, not superficially, not one-sidedly, as did both the Herodians and the Pharisees: he pierced to the deep, divine, composite pattern for man; he looked not upon the mere accidents of color or race or artificial station by which we are wont to gauge and value men; he looked to man's fundamental constitution, and saw him as his Father saw him, not as Teuton, Mongolian, African, or Saxon; but man as man, man as the offspring of God, man as the subject of eternal redemption. Looking upon the face of man in such sense, Jesus contemplated the reminting of the coin, so that the clearness of the original image de-

faced by sin might be restored. Thus Jesus viewed man in his integral, ideal, potential completeness; and thus we are slowly learning to view him. Thus all reform must view him if it accomplishes its mission.

At this point then, Christianity as cherishing the highest hope conceivable respecting the reuniting of all social and political schisms of men into one society of brothers—a communion of saints, something far deeper than a mere “federation of man”—has in it the highest claim to universal acceptance.

But again, Christianity is adapted to become the final religion through the accent it places upon the redemptive principle in its idea of God.

The Religion
of a
Redeeming God

Other religions have their idea of deity as representing power, intelligence, will, moral character, and judgment; but Christianity alone has at the very heart of its conception of Deity the principle and potency of recovery from moral evil.

The Bible, indeed, on its first pages defi-

nately records the sin and fall of man, however that fall may be construed; and straight through to the end it accentuates the sad reality. Even without a Bible, men of all times and races are aware of their sad condition in this respect. Let men philosophize as they may to explain away sin, yet after all they recognize at least "a continuous abnormality" in the life of man. At the best man's life is "an ever not-quite," a falling short, a missing of the mark. Christianity, however, presents this unparalleled characteristic that, while frankly recognizing the mystery of man's sin, it yet holds out hope of recovery from it, and offers a method of God to accomplish it.

This purpose to redeem is set forth in the Bible as anterior to the purpose even to create, and to permit the fall. Had it not been so, the risk of the fall would not have been incurred. The atonement is never to be thought of as an after-thought; it is always in revelation God's forethought, in which all his relations to a race of created

men started; it is the ground purpose of the universe. The sacrificed Christ is ever "the Lamb foreknown (as slain) from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13 : 8).

The Creator himself from the beginning purposed to become potentially responsible for man's foreseen sin, in such a way as to make possible his glorious recovery from it, and his permanent establishment in positive holiness. That there is such a thing as "original sin" is indeed true. But we are coming to see that, even back of the incipient sin, God provided what may be called an "original grace" also, a grace inchoate indeed, until man by his own free will should respond to it and make it his own, but still an original provision, adequate to more than cancel the effects of original sin. The fathers used to maintain the doctrine of "total depravity," and a most misunderstood and even misleading expression it has ever been. There is certainly a sense in which man through sin has fallen into a sad bias toward evil. His power for good has

been blighted at the root; there is "a black-drop in the blood"; and this is transmissible in heredity. Now, however, in the light of a better understanding of Christ as the eternal Logos, and his relation from-ever-of-old to our humanity, we are coming to see that if there was in some sense a deep racial "depravity," this is not the whole fact. There is also revealed in the Scriptures in close relation to it, nay, over against it, a racial inchoate redemption as well. There is stored up in Christ's person and work, as potential for us a redemption deeper down at root than the acknowledged depravity. There is in Christ a potential new heredity in grace, an heredity that actually goes into effect for all who die in infancy or in infantine conditions, like the feeble-minded and many of the heathen, and which would also become effective in all others were it not that by an act of evil self-will this potentiality is repudiated. This is most certainly implied in the teaching of Paul in the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. The

redemption there spoken of is potentially racial as well as individual. In Paul's teaching two Adams are set forth, and the first Adam in whom the race went down is represented as a mere figure, *τύπος* (type), or shadow of the great reality, the coming second Adam in whom the race was to have "more than" a recovery from sin (Rom. 5 : 14). Five times in the course of the argument in the context, redemption through the second Adam is declared to be "much more" than a restoration to the rudimental state of the unfallen first Adam (Rom. 5 : 9, 10, 15, 17, 20). The emphasis conveyed in these "much mores," the accumulating ever-blessed promise of them, as indicating how much deeper the possibilities of the new heredity of grace are than the old heredity of evil, has far too long been overlooked or ignored in evangelical thought and teaching. "Where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly" (Rom. 5 : 20, A. S. V.).

Such grace is exclusively a conception of

the Christian Scriptures, and men who are destitute of the Bible, or who reject it, are wholly without any such assurance in Deity. The utmost the pagan mind can do is to cherish the hope that there may be somewhere, although as yet unknown, some such being as we have described, some Redeemer. Many a heathen who has never had any satisfactory assurance that there is a God of mercy knows from the hunger of his own heart that "there ought to be such a God," as a pagan Chinese once remarked on hearing described for the first time the love of God in Jesus Christ.

As opposed to this, how hopeless and cruel are all ideas of God to which we are shut up by the mere agnostic ideas of the day. In the bald Darwinian doctrine of "the survival of the fittest," *e. g.*, what hope is there for the unfit of our race? Yet the unfit are in the majority. It is the nine-tenths instead of the one-tenth that are submerged. It is the glory of the Christian religion that "the Son of man is come to seek and to save

that which was lost" (Luke 19 : 10). It is idle to talk of mercy in the Bible sense apart from the Bible idea of the redeeming God. Men who shut themselves up to the cold logic of unaided philosophy cannot entertain mercy for themselves or others. Said the late Cecil Rhodes in his last hours: "So much to be done, and yet so little accomplished." And can one wonder that so despairing a note was upon his lips when the first and last article of his creed is said to have been this: "I believe in Force Almighty, the ruler of the universe, working scientifically, through natural selection, to bring about the survival of the fittest and the elimination of the unfittest?"

Such a one in the moral school has not advanced as far as the poor Chinese above referred to, who believed "there ought to be such a God!" With all his colossal power Cecil Rhodes had not yet got into the class of that rare disciple of nature, Helen Keller, who, when Bishop Brooks was giving her the first definitive lesson about God, is said

to have responded, with a face aglow with wonder, "Is that God? I have always known him, but until now I did not know his name."

The scientific conception of the survival of the fittest can never be accepted as applying to the spiritual relations of man, for the reason that it characteristically conceives of man as on the animal level only. On the physical plane it is true that nature brings into being more creatures, as it does animals, than can be educated into permanent well-being. Thus conceived of, the individual is of account as the mere natural progenitor of a better race—in order to improve the breed; and failing to do this mere nature tends to put an end to man as she does to the animalculæ. The race of man thus viewed as a kind, has no original and enduring relation to the infinite One. Says Dr. George A. Gordon: "Such a view of election to life covers only the few finest specimens and reprobates the overwhelming

majority among the lower races to death. This is the new Calvinism that is tempting thinkers. It is the Calvinism (I should say the hyper-Calvinism) of nature, elaborated from the method of the universe with animal life which, when applied to man, is the translation of the method of the brute world into the human world." Humanity is thus "an ideal which a few are born to compass, but which for men in general is a hopeless impossibility."

Dr. A. H. Bradford, in commenting on the severity of the Darwinian interpretation of the survival of the fittest, is reported once to have said substantially: "If I were given to choose being left in the hands of the law of the survival of the fittest, and being placed in the hands of the God even of Edwards' famous sermon entitled, 'Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,' I would much prefer the latter." So pessimistic a view of human life as that represented by Darwin's law of the survival of the fittest, thank God, is not the view of Christianity; for

Christianity regards humanity as not merely animal, but made in the image of God also, belonging to a commonwealth of moral worth, with the possibilities of redeemed spiritual being. Hence, all the unfit may pass into the higher stage of existence and so, as precious to God, may survive; and more than survive: they may be redeemed.

It will be recalled that the late Prof. George J. Romanes, when he returned to Christian faith after a long period of agnostic doubt, acknowledged that at the earlier period of his scientific studies he "did not sufficiently appreciate the immense importance of human nature, as distinguished from physical nature, in any inquiry touching theism." He himself says: "But since that early time I have seriously studied anthropology, including the science of comparative religions, psychology, and metaphysics, with the result of clearly seeing that human nature is the most important part of nature as a whole, whereby to investigate the theory of theism." "This," Romanes

says, "I ought to have anticipated on merely *a priori* grounds, and no doubt should have perceived had I not been too much immersed in merely physical research."

It may be added that this eminent man, for so many years a close follower of Darwin, was led to this new appreciation of human nature—the chief part of nature—through correspondence with a Christian missionary, who had also attained a distinction in the realm of natural science. I refer to Dr. John T. Gulick, now of Honolulu, and with whom the present writer had a personal interview last spring concerning this very matter. On far deeper principles than physical science even at its best has ever contemplated, cannibals of interior Africa and the South Seas, the pariahs of India, counted by their tyrannical superiors as the offscouring of the earth, and many morally bankrupt tribes of people have survived by myriads, and are the glorious trophies of Christian missions, even of Christ himself, who is the Saviour of the lost, the Re-

deemer of all types of human failure and social disorder. A religion which can produce such a saving reversal of human prospects and conditions is adapted to find welcome and prevalence on a universal scale.

But a third ground of confidence for believing that Christianity is adapted to be-

**Emphasis on
Loyalty
to Light**

come the universal and absolute religion is in the valuation placed by it upon faith, or the principle of loyalty to light. It is because of faith considered as loyalty to light that the soul may be encouraged to make an instant beginning anywhere, with whatever measure of truth it has, in the school of Christ. This idea, of the relation of instant action to any degree of light as an act of faith, has not always prevailed, and is even now far from universal in the common Christian thought. There are those who hold that in order to the existence of faith in any biblical sense, there must first be in the mind a certain intellectual concept or set of concepts, which as such must be dog-

matically believed, before the soul can have saving faith.

Such a position assumes that faith is primarily and essentially an intellectual belief: belief in a doctrine about God, or Christ, or the Bible. But this is far from the truth concerning Christian faith. There is a place for intellectual beliefs, but this in the school of method is both before and after the personal saving faith of which we now are speaking. It goes without saying that in any rational being, the soul must start with a certain stock of elementary beliefs or intuitions; and other things being equal, intellectual beliefs will always increase and clarify as Christian experience enlarges and deepens.

Saving faith at its heart, however, is a moral attitude. It is the collective executive attitude and ultimately the act of the entire being. As such, therefore, any soul anywhere, whatever its degree of intelligence or light, is capable of exercising faith in principle the moment it is appealed to.

Christianity alone among religions takes note of so elemental a thing. Christianity accommodates itself to man's present mental furnishings, irrespective of his own religious classification of himself. Christ in his school requires of no soul more than one step at a time, and that step a relative one in view of all the conditions it faces. It is in my belief at this point that many Christians sadly, narrowly misunderstand their own religion, and often place the cart before the horse in their initial appeals to men. This embarrasses Christianity and retards its acceptance.

So also it is a tactical mistake in the winning of adherents to put Christianity as a philosophy over against any other form of religion as a philosophy in the rivalry of a debate. Those who proceed as if Christianity were a competitive religion always do so to the damage of Christianity; they misrepresent its spirit and distort its method. Christianity is not in the field to

Christianity
Not
Competitive

gain a partisan mental victory. Such victories as Christianity wins, it wins from intrinsic, unselfish desert, because it complements the limited or vitalizes the expiring hope in other systems. Christianity never seeks victory for any selfish ends, but because of its genuine and quenchless love for those whom it would win from error and short-sightedness; it "came not to destroy but to fulfill" (Matt. 5 : 17). It comes as sunrise comes, not to disparage the morning star, but to bring on the day.

What the seeker after God chiefly needs is to find the clue which will lead to the truth absolute at the end of the search. No soul conditioned in this world as it is, really ever does much more than follow such a clue, with some aberrations, to the solutions of the mysteries involved in his religion. And so the central task of the soul-winner is to put the soul on the clue to better things. It is not the first business of the Christian teacher to furnish a creedal religion, ready-made with answers to peculiarly speculative

queries, but rather to put and keep men on this practical "clue," as we have called it. He is to hint the immediate next step, and then the successive steps toward the experimental knowledge of Christ himself, and later to a philosophy about Christ. There is a place for a philosophy, for theology, but this place is secondary. Christ is always within personal touch of every soul even though the soul knows it not; and by pressing inopportunately our opinions about Christ we may widen an existing chasm of separation when we should close it. Real touch with Christ is received through the inducement of the right personal attitude, in the light one has, toward his ideal. The Apostle John calls this ideal "the Word," or Christ, that light "which lighteth every man coming into the world" (John 1 : 9), the omnipresent living Redeemer. It was this Christ the primitive church so intimately knew.

To assume this willing attitude toward one's ideal is faith, a faith which is morally

rather than intellectually conditioned.¹ Our will has no power of itself to effect in the soul the sense of the essential Christ. The will, however, can negative the living lie which controls the life wherein sin rules it, and the moment this is done, the Spirit of Christ rushes to the soul's confessed helplessness and effects faith in him. As nature abhors a vacuum, so Christ loathes a spiritual void in a human being. The moment, in the light one has, the will bids a sin vacate the heart's throne, that moment the Spirit of Christ with infinite eagerness rushes in to fill the void. God's interest in conferring grace is vastly greater than man's in accepting it.

Says Dr. Hermann Cremer: "The wondrous counter-effect of God against man's sin is indeed a supernatural thing, the absolutely inconceivable to human philosophy; it is different from anything which elsewhere or otherwise ever takes place or can

¹ For a fuller discussion of this important matter see the author's "Method in Soul-Winning," Chap. IV, published by Fleming H. Revell Co., New York.

take place. This is the interior profound reality of the Christian religion." And it is due to the fact that Christianity is a religion of grace—a religion which takes the initiative with the guilty and the undeserving.

Now assuming that this beginning in Christian experience, which we have called the entrance on the clue to the experimental realization of the Christ, has taken place, Christianity depends for its deeper, maturer, intellectual apprehension of what has occurred, upon the retrospect of such an experience, as the mind of the regenerated one, like a waking dreamer, casts its eye backward over the course so mysteriously traversed.

At this point the Holy Scriptures also, with indispensable value meet a profound need. They bring out into consciousness, as they also explain to the understanding, what has occurred; and they afford a basis on which further and yet clearer subjective experiences may be had. Here is a large place for objective, even external truth—that

truth which in some modern thinking is so much disparaged, or quite ignored, for example, in some forms of the Ritschlian theology.

Moreover, it is important and reinforcing to faith to remember that this loyalty

Such
Faith Divinely
Attested

to light which Christianity
so values receives from its
divine Author a peculiar attes-

tation. It is not always indeed, and with all temperaments, at once consciously attested in an emotional way; but in fact, and particularly in the after history of the believer, this faith is so attested. The eleventh chapter of Hebrews would seem to have been written expressly to emphasize this. In that chapter faith is declared to be "the proving of things not seen"; the Margin reads, "the test" (Heb. 11 : 1, R. V.). As Abel, Abraham, Moses, and others put God's promises to the test, he attested them by the altered forms which their after-history took on. Therein all the elders were well-attested—"had witness borne to them" (Heb.

11 : 2, 4, 5, 39, R. V.). So also all men of faith in one form or another have "had witness borne to them." Were it not so God would deny himself.

This attestation would come to him who follows the light of nature, although in a different degree, as really as to him who follows the light of revelation, because the God of nature and of revelation are one and the same being. Christ speaks as really, though with less distinctness in the voice of natural conscience as in his written word, because the conscience with all other created things is constructed according to Christ, the true norm of creation. The conscience indeed, as well as other powers of the natural man, is weakened or perverted by sin, and needs to be renewed and quickened, corrected and educated by the Holy Spirit through the written word. The voice of Christ speaks in the conscience, however obscurely; and to follow that conscience, though imperfectly, is of the spirit of faith.

It is the misfortune of traditional Christianity that it is yet supposed by some of its followers that the operation of divine grace is conterminous with the limited area in which the Scriptures are known; that faith and experience in themselves cannot exist except where Bible knowledge exists. To this extent Christianity has narrowly and mistakenly alienated from itself much territory which really belongs to it. It is the first function of Christian revelation to bring to light what is in the spiritual realm; for example, life and immortality, the love of God in Christ, and the suspended judgment on sin. Paul says it was given to him as the apostle to the Gentiles, "To make all men *see* what *is* the dispensation of the mystery which for ages hath been hid in God" (Eph. 3 : 9). But the existence of every form of grace, at least potentially, was before revelation and independent of it. It is of the realities, and not of the explanation or the enrich-

The Operation
of Grace not
Conterminous
with Formal
Revelation

ment of them, we speak. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1 : 1).

We believe that the period of long waiting for converts on many a mission field might be amazingly reduced if this matter of which we are speaking were better understood and effort were more skilfully applied. By endeavoring at first to lay too extensive an intellectual groundwork for a later propagation of doctrine, the missionary may altogether obscure the more primary and elementary basis of faith, namely, the present light possessed.

In the account of David's Brainerd's work among the Delaware Indians, he speaks of

**An
Aboriginal
Prophet**

a remarkable priest, a reformer who had been "strangely moved to devote his life to an endeavor to restore the ancient religion of the Indians."¹ "He was grotesquely dressed in Indian fashion, but he was evidently de-

¹ This incident is substantially quoted from the author's "Method in Soul-Winning," published by Revell, N. Y.

vout." He lamented freely the degenerate condition of the Indians, and said that "their ignorance and wickedness had so troubled him sometimes that he had felt driven to the woods in the solitariness of his distress for them." At length God would comfort his heart and show him what he should do, whereupon he would return to his associates and love and labor for them as never before. While Brainerd was discussing with him, at times he would say, "Now that I like, so God taught me." This reformer had a doctrine "that departed souls all went southward," with this difference, that "the good were admitted into a beautiful town with spiritual walls, or walls agreeable to the nature of souls, and that the latter would forever hover near those walls, and in vain attempt to get in." Brainerd testifies that this man was sincere, honest, and conscientious, according to his own religious opinions, as no other pagan he had seen. He labored earnestly to banish the drink habit among the Indians; but by his

followers for the most part he was regarded as "a precise zealot," and his efforts were unheeded.

It would thus appear that in the heart of this nature-taught savage was the spirit of faith, existing with most limited light. It needed further instruction to give it such form and power as would enable it to grasp the large concept of "salvation"; but the germ of the new righteousness of faith evidently was there, before the missionary came with his message. It was the function of the missionary to instruct and develop that germinal faith to bring it to intelligence and power. How far even Brainerd did this, we are not told.

Within the past few years considerable tribes of people akin to the Karens have been found by missionaries in Eastern Burma, and over the borders in China and Siam. They are known as Muhsos, Was, and Kwes.¹ They give evidence of having

The Muhsos
and Their
Traditions

¹ See Appendix.

somehow been taught an elementary faith in a gospel to come. They have for years been waiting for the coming of foreign teachers who they believed would teach them of the true God. There have even been developed among them religious teachers, nature-taught or spirit-taught, who have served to keep alive and foster their higher hopes. These people were found wearing cotton cords about their necks and on their wrists, marks of their separateness from their heathen neighbors, and in part spiritually symbolic of the bonds in which they were consciously held until they should be freed by their expected emancipators.

It is needless to say that wise missionaries among such a people would at once begin their work by fostering and explaining this incipient faith in the essential divine redemption which had been previously accepted in its elementary accents. So the missionaries among them are doing ; and already in this one field several thousand converts have been baptized and are being dis-

ciplined to the Christ of the New Testament.

Doubtless many illustrations similar to this among heathen peoples exist, if they were known, and if known appreciated. If so, they are evidence of the at-homeness of Christ's religion among all men everywhere. Moreover, Christianity is a religion which by its very nature, so far from being hidden from the discernment of the simple-minded whose intellectual horizon is limited, is a religion which in its central principle cannot be apprehended by the intellect alone, however well it may be instructed even by the Bible.

Christianity as apprehensible to faith requires the right use of other faculties of the soul besides the intellect: such as the conscience, the feelings, the imagination, and above all the will. The entire composite soul must be open. The living God cannot authenticate himself to the mere fragment of a man, even though that fragment be his majestic reason. In the mere action of the understanding, the

Composite
Elements in
Faith

executive soul puts itself in reality outside the truth, and simply speculates. One needs to move by an act of will inside the truth with all the love of the heart, and with all the moral sense of the conscience. He who does this with due regard to objective truth and in the right subjective attitude finds reality. The agnosticism of the world is the natural outcome of a mistaken intellectual self-sufficiency, a species of intellect-worship. To such self-sufficiency there is and can be no valid religious authority. The biographer of George J. Romanes tells us that as he drew near the end of life he reproached himself for what he called "sins of the intellect, mental arrogance, and undue regard for intellectual supremacy." Romanes then clearly saw the principle we have enunciated, that faith in the Christian sense is essentially a right moral attitude to the light one has irrespective of its degree or source. It could not be otherwise than that those who close moral avenues of the soul in the interest of "speculative suprem-

acy," should blindly miss the way to God. It is of such blindness of heart that our Lord spoke when he said: "Thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes" (Matt. 12 : 25). The essential difference in habit of mind between the babe—the child mind—and the creature of intellectual prudence, the philosophic mind, is this, that the babe brings its whole composite being into action, and the philosopher but a fragment of his being. Now Christianity risks everything as to its self-evidencing power with him who will put its proposals to the experimental test. In this respect the method of Christianity is in line with the inductive method in the physical sciences. It puts the inquirer into the laboratory as if he were a chemist with his elemental substances, his crucibles, dynamos, test tubes, etc., and says, "Now by personal experimentation enter into relations with the God of grace; use his means of grace, and get your experienced results. Those results you will find to cor-

respond with the true and worthy dogmatics, or theorems of your text-books; and wherein they do not, you must revise your theories." Thus Christianity shines in its own light. As thus relying upon its self-evidencing power, Christianity can afford to appeal instantly, everywhere, to all types of earnest life, without fear of any rival. Its practical difficulty indeed, is to secure in human nature the teachableness that will really test it. When, however, this is secured, and the test is applied, the divine attestation is always forthcoming, and there results an experience of a reality which is self-approving.

But lest in placing such emphasis upon this matter of the value of a believing attitude toward the measure of light possessed, it be thought that this is too subjective, we pass on to say that there is a complementary truth undoubtedly needed; and this also is supplied by Christianity through the presentation of its eternal and personal Christ, as the adequate object of faith. Faith—Chris-

tain faith in its complete sense—does demand an adequate external object upon which to rest, as well as a right internal attitude.

And here Christianity meets the case, for Christianity is objectively the religion of a person. Christianity is
 The Religion of a Person Christ, the personal Christ.

In saying this, however, it must be remembered that this Christ was present in the universe as “the essential Christ,”¹ just as really and even personally so, before the historic incarnation as after.

As his personality, however, came to expression in the incarnation, thus only could Christ be satisfactorily known. The degree of knowledge of this person, whether with or without revelation, may and does vary widely. Some may not know his name at all, like Socrates or Seneca, or Melchizedek, or Helen Keller in the early stages of her religious musings. Of course, other

¹ The apotheosis of wisdom in Prov. 8 has long been considered as a form of description of this essential Christ.

things being equal, the more perfectly Christ's name—as explaining his redeeming work—is apprehended by the intelligence, the better for a faith that would be robust. The point to be noted, however, is that the Christ of the New Testament is one and the same person with “the essential Christ,” the external Logos of eternity. He has always been existent in the universe, with his redeeming purpose. All things were created by him and for him, and all things consist or hold together in him. So far as any one has been saved, as multitudes in the old economy, previous to the full revelation of Christ, doubtless were saved in some degree, they were saved on the basis of the eternal incipient atonement of God-in-Christ.¹ “Neither is there salvation in any

¹Of course such a conception of salvation is a most inadequate one as compared with that which the New Testament sets forth. It is at the best but embryonic, and far from satisfies any ideal worthy of a Bible-enlightened Christian or an intelligent missionary passion; but it is folly to deny an infantine faith where it is found to exist, and he grossly misinterprets our God if one represent him as inappreciative of it. (Jonah 4 : 10, 11; Acts 10 : 35.)

other" (Acts 4 : 12). He was first revealed as "the seed of the woman" (Gen. 3 : 15), and later to Israel by his memorial name, "Yahweh," or "Jehovah," "the one who will be" (Exod. 3 : 14). At length he was fully disclosed in the actual incarnation. But he was ever "the Ancient of days" (Dan. 7 : 13). "In the beginning was the Word" (John 1 : 1). He was that light "which lighteth every man coming into the world" (John 1 : 9). He was that supreme personified ideal of all lesser forms of ideal by whomsoever or wherever cherished.

Says Paul in his letter to the Romans:
 "But the righteousness of faith saith thus,
 The Word or Say not in thine heart, Who
 Ideal in shall ascend into heaven? (that
 the Heart is, to bring Christ down:)
 or, Who shall descend into the abyss? (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee—that is, the ideal is nigh thee—in thy mouth and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith which

we preach" (Rom. 10:6-8). This "word," or ideal of faith in itself considered, as we understand the apostle's thought, is such a thing as may be vaguely cherished in the human heart in an intuitional way, irrespective of a book revelation. "The word of faith which we preach," is the same reality—the ideal cherished—receiving a clearer, fuller, and biblical explanation. This essential faith, as latent, incipient, and existent in however slight a degree in the human soul is immediately and everywhere to be sought for by the Christian missionary. This embryonic thing—faith in an ideal however faint—wherever found is to be promptly encouraged, explained, led out into exercise and fed with revealed truth, for it may be depended on as a sign that the essential Christ is brooding the soul and yearning with infinite solicitude to bring it to its own. It is with this elementary, rudimentary faith-principle in the soul that the missionary finds his true place of beginning with the pagan mind everywhere. In this he

finds the soul's moral handle which he may seize, hold, and control for larger and higher things.

As the nature of God, and he is one God, whether speaking in nature or revelation,

In what Sense
God is
Immanent

has become better understood, we have come to see that he is more than a being whose favor may be won. God always is and has been a being who is in the attitude of the initiator of the processes of grace. He is always beforehand with the sons of men. Through those distortions of God which the presence of sin in the soul always tends to create, God is made to appear not only wholly outside the soul, but far off from it, and even hostile to it. The sinner always conceives of God as his enemy, whose reluctance to save must be overcome. Now this is a dreadful caricature of God, and entirely falsifies the situation. We are coming to see that in a deep sense God is really immanent in the soul, that as omnipresent he dwells within the sphere at least of all human

personality, in its conscience and consciousness. To be sure, in the case of the unregenerate, God, while existing in the sphere of personality, has not yet come to occupy the throne room of the heart, so as to form Christ within it. Nevertheless, God as Saviour is ever knocking at the heart's door to find welcome and entrance. He is infinitely eager to break through man's antagonism. Like the atmosphere pressing with ever-persistent force many pounds to the square inch to enter every vacuum, so the God of grace presses to ascend the throne of man's heart to save and bless. There is a spiritual immanence for which the divine immanence as ordinarily understood by Prof. B. P. Bowne and others is but the pre-condition of the profounder experience.¹

A real penitent never has to do God's work for him; to provide any propitiation for himself to render God willing, or to importune him to relax any supposed reluc-

¹ See a fine discussion of this subject in "The Diviner Immanence," by Francis J. McConnell. Published by Eaton & Mains, New York.

tance on his part to save. Surely God, in whom the atonement was eternal, who as the essential Christ, was before the world came into being, and in whom as the eternal Logos man's very constitution had its ground, cannot for a moment be truly thought of as waiting on man to take the initiative in his salvation, except as the withdrawal of man's sinful resistance to the gracious control of the soul's true Sovereign may be considered as initiative. Let but one step in penitence for sin, and in faith Godward, be taken by the human soul, and the God of grace, however poorly understood intellectually, or theologically, will be found in the essential Christ, or the moral ideal trusted, waiting to embrace it, even as the father in the parable of the prodigal—who was really God-in-Christ—saw his penitent son “while he was yet a great way off, and ran and embraced him” (Luke 15 : 20), and welcomed him home to the heavenly forgiveness and bounty. Thus the spirit of Deity and the essential Christ have ever been one and the

same in their gracious attitude to mankind, even though imperfectly known.

This Christ, however, of whom we have been speaking, as "the essential Christ" as

dimly apprehended in pre-

Christian times, or among

Christ the
Object of
His Religion

peoples destitute of the Bible

revelation, is the "Word," or the ideal of

Paul's thought in the Epistle to the Romans,

is the personal Jesus of Nazareth in the

Gospels, is the "Word made flesh," of John,

who "dwelt among us," and is "the efful-

gence of the divine glory and the image of

his substance" as described in Hebrews.

And so historical Christianity commends

itself as preeminently the religion of a per-

son. In this religion Christ is the object—

the creative author and end—of his religion

rather than its subject as his followers are.

This is so because as he is manifested in the

New Testament he is a real incarnation of

Deity; the absolute equivalent of Christ is

God in the flesh. Christ did indeed per-

fectly illustrate, even embody, all the prin-

ciples of the system he promulgated. But he was not the product of that religion. He was not himself made by the current religions of his time, not even by Judaism, and that especially as some would have it, shaped by the religions of the older, larger East. He was altogether original, supernatural, pre-existent, self-supporting, the Christ that should judge the world. He came "from above," in a distinctive and unique sense. His religion always descends upon us, as eventually the New Jerusalem will come down from God out of heaven.

The ethnic religions are of a different sort. They indeed have had their prophets, like Confucius, Gotama, Mahomet, and Zoroaster. But the system of no one of these prophets inhered in himself in the way that Christ's does in him; for with the person of Christ himself stands or falls every fundamental doctrine of Christianity, incarnation, atonement, resurrection, faith, forgiveness, regeneration, and the final judgment of grace; any one of the ethnic systems might

have existed in its principles apart from the personality of its promulgator. The exact opposite is the case with Christianity and its Christ. This Christ was indeed a real historic figure, and not a magical prodigy, not a mere religious genius. True, he had human limitations, but these he voluntarily assumed for us. It was a process of self-emptying and so of self-limitation that he underwent, in the interests of holy and saving love. In the realm of the moral and spiritual, Christ was always and at every moment king. He dominated for spiritual ends what we call natural law, and "broke the entail of sin and the Nemesis of guilt"; and his absolutely original power to do this has been proved in the experience of millions who have been recovered from sin's dominion. His becoming sin for us, and tasting its judgment, was throughout a voluntary act, a moral achievement, such as was possible only to Deity in the flesh. Through the very cross he suffered, Christ catholicised his religion and universalized

himself. As lifted up from the earth he draws all unto him.

In all these respects Christ was his own religion, and its timeless and eternal object for all men. He can have no successor, for he himself is "the Word made flesh," "the same yesterday, and to-day, yea and forever" (Heb. 13 : 8). Christ therefore from his Virgin birth in Bethlehem to his atoning death on Calvary is the consummate expression of the divine self-activity at its center, challenging the world to put him to the test for salvation from its sins, and from all moral bondage. He is himself the gospel.

As the divine-human personality, he is at once the supreme revelation of both God and man as personal. The world can never know who God is until it knows Christ. Nor can it know what man is until it knows him in Christ. Christ was the universal man. His characteristic designation of himself was "the Son of man," by which was meant that he was idealized man, "the

last Adam" (1 Cor. 15 : 45), the new head of the race; in him God and man meet and find each other. The Christian idea of salvation is the response by faith of the entire personality of man to the grace that is in the whole personality of Christ. Christianity recognizes nothing as finally accomplished for its disciple until the miracle wrought upon the personal will of the believer has secured that response, and the whole being is recentered in Christ to be at length glorified with him.

It is through the power we have personally to test this religion of a person by the response of our whole personality to its overtures and claims, that we arrive at un-

**Adequate
Authority
in Religion**

questionable authority in religion, and in the Christian religion as in no other. It is such an authority chiefly to him who puts it to actual test, as a sinner does in receiving redemption through Christ's atoning cross. This testing of Christianity receives something more than an evidential result.

An evidence of Christianity is something which commends itself to intelligence, to the reason, to a school of thought. Authority deals more with the conscience, commends itself to a moral situation, to the possibility of actual victory over sin; so this authority is more than evidential. It appeals to the entire composite man, but especially to the whole person as moral, as needing redemption from sin, and it approves itself as a gospel of salvation even unto the uttermost. Authority for a human soul needing salvation from the sin situation is found chiefly in the disclosure of the real grace, which can be experienced and proved in the soul's life. "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind now I see" (John 9 : 25).

A religion thus centering in a person which can be experimentally tested by the right relation of one's whole personality to it, is the ideal, authoritative religion for universal humanity, of whatever race or clime. It is the fundamentally divine, the

human, the universal religion. It is finality, even absoluteness itself in that realm; and so commends itself to all men.

But again, Christianity is adapted to become universal in its prevalence because it reveals a doctrine of providence, as able to tranquilize and bless human life, irrespective of outward or material conditions. This doctrine is posited on the assumption that the soul has but one final and absolute need, and that is God. "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon the earth that I desire beside thee" (Ps. 73 : 25). By the providence of God we mean the assurance so emphatically given in the Scriptures, that all the circumstances and events of life are working together for good to the soul that is filial, that is trustful and submissive in its attitude toward him (Rom. 8 : 28). This is a doctrine that cannot be abstractly proved, apart from Scripture statements, to one who doubts it. If accepted at all, it must be at first tentatively ac-

**A Doctrine
of
Providence**

cepted upon grounds of one's general confidence in the teachings of revelation. This done, the hypothesis is then to be lived upon step by step and day by day in the school of life. As this is done ever increasing tranquility of life follows, and the evidence of the wisdom of thus living begins to grow, till finally no event, however distressing, will shake one's confidence that "underneath are the everlasting arms." With Job one can say, "yea, though he slay me, yet will I trust him" (Job 13 : 15). One will choose with Moses, "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Heb. 11 : 25). With Paul one will say, "For our light affliction which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; *while we look*—mark this qualification—not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen" (2 Cor. 4 : 17, 18).

One of the richest spiritual biographies known to the writer is that of Madam Baron-

ess Bunsen. Her life was lived for many years in association with her distinguished husband in the foremost court society of Rome, London, and in various German cities. Her home was the resort of statesmen, historians, scholars, and artists, embracing also eminent Christian personages of her time.

That which makes this biography so invaluable from a Christian point of view, is that throughout the very remarkable correspondence that fills the volume, carried on with the great variety of characters in different spheres of life, as well as with her own children, Madam Bunsen's sentiment abounds with clear, sane, and biblical expositions of the divine care under which all life is lived which is filial toward God. In one of her letters to her mother while yet a young Christian, this remarkable woman wrote: "I have begun the new year with a degree of cheerfulness of spirit which I would not by any consideration contrive to lessen, wherefore I have allowed myself

to enjoy unrestrained a feeling which I am thankful to say grows upon me every year, of confidence, not in the prosperity of life, but in the power of going through with God's assistance whatever life may bring: going through not as a beast of burden groaning under the weight imposed, but as a joyful bearer of the ark of the sanctuary. Human strength alone is as insufficient to support the weight of a feather as of a mountain, but with that aid which is ever granted to them that ask, the mountain will not be more oppressive than the feather."

To a friend who doubted if he could endure the difficulties of his position, she wrote, "Screw your courage to the sticking place, and let life bring what it will; say to yourself: 'It shall not get the better of me.' To be brought into a contingency depended not upon yourself; to get out of a contingency depends not, or may not depend, upon yourself; but to be master of the crisis and stand upright before it—that is your part.

Breast the wave, Christian, where it is strongest;
Look for day, Christian, when night is longest."

This reality of providence is as available for the most poverty-stricken pariah of India, as it is for the most favored of civilized peoples. As this is a potential value, however, all need to be brought to realize that they must co-operate with the truth of providence if they are to gain the blessing provided in it.

This doctrine of providence is grounded in two things; first, in the nature of the divine love which ever outreaches to impart to man God's own type of blessedness in the human life's unfolding; and second, in the fact that he who is *en rapport* with such a God, need expect nothing inharmonious with his highest and ultimate welfare to occur to him. No other system than Christianity has such a doctrine; it cannot have, because no other system has such a conception of Deity, nor such a conception of possible harmony with the Deity.

Doubtless, such a doctrine, even by most

Christians, is but feebly believed; and human nature often rebelliously resists it in its practical bearings—resists it from sheer wilfulness and pride. Probably more unrest and mental misery arise from distrust of and anger against God concerning untoward events in life than from any other single cause. There is a strain against the Infinite. And yet this Christian doctrine is an elementary thing in the system of Christian truth. It is not fatalism. Christianity puts no embargo on one's bettering his conditions, if he justly can; "it encourages to this." Whenever, however, the circumstances of life or its sorrows impose limitations or afflictions beyond man's power to avert or remove, they are to be regarded as divinely permitted at least, if not imposed, for divine though mysterious reasons; and when trustfully submitted to, from that moment they become providential in their moral bearings, their graciousness of purpose, and have an entirely changed significance and value. God may not ordain the

event in itself which occasions trial, *e. g.*, the sale of Joseph into Egypt; but he does ordain the moral bearings of even such an event in itself sinful, upon those who are disciplined thereby, and thus overrules the evil (Gen. 50 : 20). There is of course a sovereign element in the appointment of human conditions which our philosophy cannot sound, but which we must take on trust. The Christian thing to do when events are plainly beyond one's power of control or understanding is devoutly to accept them, however trying and however mysterious, and seek for their moral lessons. That faith is yet in the infantine stage which has not realized that the richest blessing in the grace of Christ comes through the school of trial. The teachings of Jesus, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles, and indeed the whole Bible is shot through and through with this teaching as to providence. The exact form of outward circumstance in itself considered then, would seem to have little or nothing to do

with the measure of the real values in life. The apostle was able to say, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content" (Phil. 4 : 11). The reason of this deep confidence was that through the very pressure of the events of life, and under the guidance of that Spirit, who is also immanent within the wheels of all circumstance, Paul knew he was finding his way into God's eternal plan for him. He knew that the divine ordainment was behind him and that things must work for good.

He fixed thee 'mid this dance
Of plastic circumstance,
This present, thou forsooth, would'st fain
arrest;
Machinery just meant
To give thy soul its bent,
Try thee, and turn thee forth sufficiently
impressed.
Look not thou down but up;
To uses of a cup,
The festal board lamps flash and trumpets peal,
The new wine's foaming flow,
The Master's lips aglow:
Thou heaven's consummate cup,
What needest thou with earth's wheel?

Every man's life in its last analysis is a plan of God.¹ By him the end is seen from the beginning. Every disappointment is his appointment; every sorrow is provided for, every hair of one's head numbered, and every tear put into God's bottle. For every deprivation and bereavement rightly received, there is provided a compensation in the grace of God, so that when life's course shall have been run, it will appear that "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8 : 18).

Every Man's
Life a
Plan of God

How adapted then is Christianity wherever it finds human life and under whatsoever conditions, to commend itself to all, for it has assurance that its grace covers all the exigencies and extremities of life. It undertakes not only to justify the soul from its sins, but also to redeem and uplift the whole life course; to guide it into a career, and

¹ See Bushnell's great sermon on "I girded thee (Cyrus), though thou hast not known me" (Isa. 45 : 5).

on to a divine goal. The veteran missionary Dr. Hiram Bingham, now of Honolulu, but who has spent a half-century in missionary service in the Gilbert Islands, once wrote of his isolation in those islands, "I have at times been so cut off from the home land that at times letters reached me only after intervals of eighteen months. I have been much alone, but never lonely." So deep was his abiding assurance of the divine presence with him. Surely then, if the human soul anywhere, in any land, would find a religion which promises to take account of the hard and painful externals in its life and lot, and will turn them all into present and eternal well-being, where can it so well find it as in Christianity?

Nor has the Christian missionary found his whole message until he is prepared to teach all suffering souls whom he touches, this corollary of his gospel of grace; that on the grounds of the gospel he brings, each one may be certainly blessed by accepting his lot in life however circumstanced, as

after all enswathed in the divine love, care, and purpose. The very woes that afflict him are intended to be for him the very gentlest treatment which on the whole God himself can use, in order to work out for him the highest good.

A valuable, recently published book is "The Altar Fire," by Arthur Christopher Benson, son of the archbishop of Canterbury, and one of the editors of the "Letters of the late Queen Victoria." This book purports to be the diary of a person who started in life with fortune, gained fame as an author, was enjoying life with his charming family, but to whom all sorts of disasters afterward came. He lost his power to write books, was bereft of his family and fortune, suffered nervous exhaustion, hypochondria, and yet finally emerged into a spiritual tranquillity which was entirely independent of all the conditions which previously had seemed so essential to him. He simply learned through the school of trial to put himself humbly and confidently in

the hands of the God who made him. He reasoned, "I cannot amend myself, but I can at least co-operate with God's loving will. I can stumble onward with my hand in his, like a timid child with a strong and loving father. I may wish to be lifted in his arms. I may wonder why he does not have more pity on my frailty, but can believe that he is leading me home, and that his way is best and nearest."

One of the strange evidences of the truth of providence, is the fact that those very Christians in whom is found the strongest faith in the doctrine, are those who have suffered most in the school of life. Indeed, only such can prove the doctrine in its deepest worth.

Another element in Christianity which adapts it to become the universal world religion is its ultimate aim. That aim is to create the god-like in personal character. The confidence that such a goal may be reached is grounded in the fact that the

**Aims at the
Godlike in
Character**

work of Christ set forth in the Scriptures on its subjective side is to form Christ himself within the soul as "the hope of glory." This hope of glory becomes such a hope because through conformation to the Christ within the spirit, the outcome of God's method of recentering the soul within himself, the soul becomes possessed of a God-consciousness, which itself is glory begun below. Man was created to become a son of God, actually so, as potentially every man, despite the fall, is still such a son by virtue of his creation. The glorified Christ as the second Adam, the firstborn of many brethren, is the norm of his sonship. By regeneration sons and daughters are divinely begotten into Christ's moral image; and so there results a new and higher race—the new-Adamic race—greater and fuller than the first Adamic, by as much as the second creative work is higher than the first.

In this our mortal sphere, a disciplinary stage of being, "it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that if we shall

be manifested, we shall be like Him—have our epiphany—for we shall see him even as he is" (1 John 3 : 2). Our new corporeality will resemble his own at the right hand of God. We shall be glorified in body, soul, and spirit. We shall be godlike in character, and godlike also in the exercise of powers and functions of which we now have little conception.

Thus our salvation is no artificial thing. While it begins objectively through the attachment of our faith to God manifest in the flesh, and dying and living again for us in a vicarious way, so that our confidence is reawakened to trust and hope in him; yet when the process is complete, we shall find ourselves personally transformed into his real moral likeness, so that our character itself will stand forth a finished new created product, a character godlike. The soul will then have a new spontaneity of righteousness which will loathe sin forever. By exercise in this new freedom the soul even here progressively by second nature becomes

godlike. This will at last be a righteousness as voluntary as Christ's own, such as in the fulness of the divine loyalty he expressed in the exclamation, "I delight to do thy will, O my God" (Ps. 40 : 8).

What system of religion holds out a hope like this for sinful man? Other systems than Christ's speak of some Nirvana, little else than non-existence, a moral negation at the best, or of purgatorial cleansings, filled with pain and torment, or of endless trans-migrations extended through long eons of agonized probations, wherein man may doubtfully hope to emerge into ultimate but vague felicity. It is left for the religion of Christ alone to negative all these heartless, abortive, despairing destinies, and to offer us in lieu thereof a hope as certain and natural to us as Christ's own in which we are his joint heirs.

But granting that the Christianity of ✓ which we have been speaking is adapted to be the absolute world religion, may it be legitimately and everywhere propagated?

This matter of propagating Christianity is attended with doubts in some minds. This propagation implies a relation to other religions more or less subversive of their very existence, at least in their present forms. Hence many are questioning the right of Christianity to place itself with aggressive activity in relations which disparage at least those ancient systems. With this question I shall deal in the second part of this discussion, to which I now pass.

Part III

The Right of the Church to Propagate this Religion

I WAS lately asked in a symposium on missions to answer the question: "Has Christianity the moral right to supplant the ethnic faiths?" The influences which give rise to such a query, often in the public mind, are mainly two: the conception of missions

Causes
of the
Questioning

represented by questionable forms of missionary zealotry, and prevalent thought-tendencies in comparative religion. Of all religions Christianity undoubtedly is the most missionary. Its aggressiveness proves disturbing. The right of Christianity to encroach upon other systems is doubted. In viewing the contest speculatively, ere men are aware, sympathy is engendered for one type of these faiths as against another. A spirit of championship then springs up, zeal for partisan victory obscures the importance of the truth at stake, and the issue is likely to be viewed as if it were a game, to be lost or won on the field of athletics. If the question were, "Has any form of religion a moral right to play at religion as a game?" we answer, "No!" The real issue involved is vastly deeper and more serious. There is something more than a tournament on.

The fact that the question of the legitimacy of missions prevails in many minds is sufficient reason why it should be squarely

faced and met. The answer to it profoundly affects, not only Christian missions, but moral effort of every kind.

It is important at the outset to establish an understanding of terms. To attempt to answer the question propounded in its present form would be to increase a confusion already existing. From the query as above stated, it is necessary to eliminate at least three grave assumptions:

1. That the ethnic faiths as they now exist as really as the Christian, although in a less degree, are of divine origin.

**Misleading
Assumptions**

2. That Christian missionary effort is intrinsically the assertion of a right—a right asserted as against other natural rights.

3. That true missionary effort, by first intention at least, seeks to supplant that which is really defensible.

When these erroneous presuppositions are disposed of, and the case is stated as its nature requires, we shall have gone far toward

simplifying the answer to the question before us.

As to the first element of misconception, it is implied that the ethnic faiths have an equal standing with Chris-

tianity in the court of com-
parative religion; and, if so,

**Ethnic Faiths
Not Co-ordinate
With
Christianity**

that they have such standing

because of their inherent meritorious qualities—such qualities as meet the real needs of the people now holding them. But this inference is due to *a priori* considerations and begs the question involved. Such an inference concretely expressed means to say, for example, that Christianity and Hinduism equally arose out of purely natural antecedent causes; that in the nature of the case, Hinduism is as perfectly adapted to meet the needs of Hindus as Christianity is to meet the needs of Anglo-Saxons; that God is as really the author of one set of adaptations as of the other; that there is nothing more supernatural in Christianity than in Hinduism; and that therefore the attempt of Occi-

dentals to enter Asia and to readjust Hindu conditions to Christian ideals is an impertinence and intrusion. Theirs for them are as good as ours for us. Any such plea entered for the non-Christian religions grows out of hidden premises—premises that are assumed, but are really the very things that need to be proved. Such plea, so common in our day, is a deduction of the so-called “historical method,” just now so much in vogue. It is a corollary of the doctrine of evolution extremely viewed. But a just view of the evolutionary principle warrants no such corollary, and the deduction is an abuse of the historical method, however legitimate that method is within certain limits.

In the view of its champions, the “historical method” is thought to be the one great and decisive medium of knowledge; whereas there are other methods of vastly more worth.

One has spoken of this method substantially as follows:

**Abuse of the
Historical
Method**

It assumes to determine what is by what has been; it elucidates the law of man's moral nature by the principles which are supposed to have governed the anthropoid ape; the authority of the Bible by going back to the ghost-and-spirit worship which are supposed to be its real genesis. The nature and value of each present fact is determined by its supposed historic origin and development. But we may reverse the process; interpret the monkey by the man; get light on the value of the Hebrew revelation by its solution of our present problems; . . . look for the Maker's mark not only in the fire-mist, but in the structure of the moral organism. . . It is often a matter of great advantage not to have to wait for the "historic method" to be perfected and corrected; for example, when a man has an attack of appendicitis, the knowledge of the vermiform appendix as it now is, yields a far more valuable contribution to the solution of his case than the entire history of that organ.¹

And especially, we would add, when the history in question is most hypothetical.

Now, respecting the origin of the ethnic religions, it must at the least be said that they cannot be accounted for by a single, uniform, upward evolution; their genesis is

¹ John Henry Denison, in an article in the "Atlantic Monthly" for June, 1906, entitled, "The White Death of the Soul."

composite. Even though some or all of them started with elements of truth, they now represent dreadful deteriorations and corruptions of an earlier purity. Doubtless, underlying all these religions there are some elements of natural, and hence of true, religion: certain intuitions, suggestions of conscience, and hints of nature conveying much needful knowledge of God. "These not having the law (revelation) are a law (revelation) unto themselves."

This form of light is the common property of all men with or without a book revelation; and it emanates from Christ, the eternal Logos. Moreover, this form of light affords even an elementary gospel, as Paul in Rom. 2 : 4-10 clearly intimates, however poorly apprehended or appropriated that gospel is. If men had given credence to such early gospel hints as were afforded by Abel's altar or by their own deeper intuitions; if they had so believed as to act on their best

**A Gospel
of Nature
Antecedent
to all
Religious Cults**

belief—for such and such only is faith—they would have been saved in some infantine degree, and the systems of religion represented by them would have been purer. Among antediluvians, for example, Noah had, as Dr. William Ashmore has said, “no monopoly of gopher wood.” There was a monopoly in unbelief, except as Noah and his family were the shining exceptions to it. Doubtless, had others than Noah gone to boat-building, showing faith in God’s provision to save, they would have been preserved with Noah.

But no truly historic account of the ethnic religions can be just that does not take note of the persistent tendencies of sin to pervert man’s original stock of truth. Sin has distorted the elements of primitive religion with which the ethnic faiths started; it has falsified normal conceptions of both God and man. Sin is God-accusing as well as self-justifying; it projects its own perverseness upon God. “I knew thee that

**Ethnic Faiths
Perversions
of the Primitive
Gospel**

thou art an hard man," said the man in the parable (Matt. 25 : 24, A. V.). He really knew nothing of the kind. He himself was the "hard man," who should have discerned a truer aspect of the divine character. The God of this man's evil imagination was a fiction. Sin has thus been a fruitful means of introducing into all the ethnic religions fearful perversions, gross deteriorations of an earlier truth.

Then official and ecclesiastical traditionalism and self-interest have left their marks upon the ethnic religions. This has been true in Judaism, and even in Christianity. Because of the mischievous effects of priestcraft and clericalism, Israel lost her nationality and Christianity early fell from her apostolic estate, and has but slowly recovered. Surely the ethnic faiths have not been exempt from similar and as degrading processes of deterioration.

If the principle of evolution as a factor has played a part in the development of religious systems and activities, retrogression

and degeneracy have played their mischievous part also. "Broken lights" of the true "Sun of Righteousness" which once existed have been put out. They have been extinguished by the people's grossness. Through Brahmin priest, Taoist conjurer, Mohammedan dervish, and African witch-doctor, that "Light which lighteth every man as he cometh into the world," has been turned into darkness, because as abnormal religionists they have cast a shadow on the sun. Said Christ: "All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers." That which was man's original heritage in the eternal world—the essential Christ—has been stolen away, rendering it more difficult for the redeeming God to do his intended work.

Satanic influence also has entered in to debase the ethnic faiths. The long history of man is in line with the biblical account of an irrepressible and tragic conflict between the "seed of the woman," the Son of man, the last Adam, and the old serpent, the devil. It is therefore impossible for us to blind our

eyes to the corrupting influence of diabolic agency upon the primeval order.

A day spent in Benares, Canton, or Kyoto amid the temples of idolatry and shame and witchcraft will convince any candid observer that the same Satanic influence which in Bible times animated Jannes and Jambres, Elymas, Simon Magus, and the Sons of Sceva, in modern pagan life also often makes religionists drunk with its sorceries. Let one who doubts read a work by the late Dr. John L. Nevius, a foremost Presbyterian missionary in China, on the demonology of that land. The national symbol of China is a dragon. Chinese Taoism, which once represented a sort of Logos doctrine, has so deteriorated as to be little else but the expression of demonism.

A second implication of the question propounded is that Christian missions in themselves are intrinsically the assertion of a right, as against other natural rights. To conceive of such missionary effort as springs from the mind of Christ as the assertion of

a mere right is to put such effort on too low a plane altogether.

But Christian missions are not concerned to defend themselves as merely legitimate; they are more than that; they are an outreach of grace in behalf of others; efforts to

Christian
Missions
More Than
Legitimate

save men unto God and unto themselves, and not to mere Western sectarianism. Said Paul as he came to the Romans, through storm and shipwreck and imprisonment: "For I long to see you that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift." Christianity is not competitive; it never exults over another system because it is a rival, nor seeks a victory for victory's sake. It rather yearns over the inadequate system to make good all it fails to do; it reaches beyond the devotee to the personality of the divine ideal of Christ's purchase to render it godlike in being and destiny.

In an address given by ex-Secretary Foster in Carnegie Music Hall, New York—an address widely repeated on the secretary's

return from a round-the-world tour a few years since, he substantially said that if he were asked by what right Christian America had gone out into the various lands of Asia to disturb and reconstruct systems and institutions in those lands known as heathen, his reply would be: "The right to communicate to others benefits too good to keep." The answer cannot be gainsaid. The legitimacy of foreign missions as the profoundest agency in the ongoing civilization of the world, is beyond all question, if it is not prosecuted as a partisan crusade of one religious system as against another, but rather as such a renewing and constructive potency as seeks to bring blessing to all the world. Christianity has in it elements of such transcendent value as are adapted to every one on earth. And so the conclusion is irresistible, that by the same intelligence and will that brought them into being, they are intended for every one on earth. He who discerns this adaptation himself must share in executing the intention, or become guiltier

than before for the estate of his brother-man.

Then as to the third assumption: True Christian missions do not attempt to supplant what in an ethnic faith

is in itself good and true. In ^{Missions} ~~Displace~~ ^{Nothing} ~~Worthy~~ Confucianism, for example, it

discerns between the true and the false, or the inadequate, and seeks not, by any first intention at least, to destroy the inadequate.

So far as there are in all men elements of natural religion, true in themselves, there is no occasion to displace them. Such residue of natural religion, wherever found, is to be complemented, fulfilled by "the true light which now shineth." Christianity in its normal exercise acts on the baser elements of other systems as quicksilver acts on pulverized gold-bearing quartz; it gathers up the particles of precious metal hidden in the coarser element. In this process the rock is discarded, but there is no contempt of any real worth. As the quicksilver fulfils the quartz for bullion or coin-current, so Chris-

tianity brings to its own the truth latent in the ethnic systems.

Now, with these unfortunate confusions eliminated, the question remaining to be answered is a very different one from that propounded to us, and so perplexing to many minds. The real issue amounts to this: Is Christianity warranted in imparting its divine grace to all mankind, and thus realizing to them the values hinted or incipient in other religions, even though the process in the end will discard the base and harmful elements incumbering them? There can be but one answer to such a question—an emphatic, “Yea, verily.”

The Christianity of the New Testament is in no conflict with the soul in any land or time who in his light has acted penitently and believingly toward his highest ideal. That in principle is faith, whether exercised by an Abraham, a Plato, or a Spurgeon, by an Enoch, a Socrates, or a George Müller. So far then as among religionists of any cult, the faith-principle has existed—doubt-

less, it often exists despite the cult—God has gracious regard for it, as ethnic religions rarely have, for they have no such grace as Christianity has to offer.

In so far, indeed, as missionary effort has been prosecuted as a crusade of one religious system against another with a view to some selfish partisan advantage, undoubtedly such form of mission work has been open to grave objection. Wherever in any human being or society any inherent, natural right exists, Christ respects that right. It is a thing really implanted by himself; he has therefore no occasion to antagonize it; he would rather conserve and nourish it. If sad abuses have often marred religious effort, this is because of weakness in the agent, and not because the extension of truth in itself is evil. When, for example, Francis Xavier went to the East and, not content to share his spiritual grace with his fellow-men, proceeded to assert the claim of his imperial master at Rome to temporal power in Japan, he violated actual

human rights in the interest of fictitious claims of a usurping master ; it naturally resulted that the first proselytes were turned upon and slain by thousands, and Christianity was interdicted in Japan for three hundred years.

In 1899, under severe pressure from France, an imperial decree was secured from the Chinese government conferring on Roman Catholic dignitaries a recognized official status in China. Accordingly, French bishops adopted the rank of Chinese governors, traveled in an official chair with bearers appropriate to that rank, with attendants and outriders, and had a cannon discharged upon their arrival and departure. When this same status was offered to Protestant missionaries it was promptly declined. Thus they avoided blaspheming the whole principle of rights and committing missionary suicide. Mr. A. R. Colquhoun once wrote : " The blood of the martyrs is in China the seed of French aggrandizement."

In 1900 Germany, though Protestant,

seized the district of Kiao Chao in China as an indemnity for the slaughter of two German priests, and precipitated the Boxer uprising. Is it any wonder that men ask: "What sort of missions is this?"

In estimating this question of rights, there is danger that we may attribute to them a false reality. A custom is not necessarily the expression of a **False
Notions of
Rights** natural right, nor is it a true evolution simply because it is ancient or indigenous to a people. There is a difference even in pagan lands between real and fictitious rights. Would any man in his senses claim that the horrors of Hindu widowhood, or the nameless immoralities of Hindu temples, or the abominations of the caste system, as described by Amy Wilson-Carmichael in her book, "Things as They Are," or the system of plurality of wives in Mohammedanism, or the sodden polyandry of Tibet, represent any human rights before God or men? Are these the product of any true evolution? That there are justifiable ways and means

whereby good men may seek to remedy these abuses is beyond question.

Respecting any true element in the religion of a pagan the real missionary will say, as did Paul at Athens: "What therefore ye worship in ignorance this I set forth unto you." This element need never be antagonized or minimized; it rather is to be used and built upon. It is because of the existence of this element at the basis of every man's moral nature that Christianity can make a beginning anywhere, at any moment, with any human soul, under whatever system of religion it exists. For example, if in a heathen temple of China or India I behold some poor devotee in sorrow, groaning out a prayer to an idol, I need not check that cry; it represents just what I do when in some dire extremity I pour out my anguish to an invisible sympathy. What I need to do is to know the language of this worshiper; to gain his confidence; so to get into sympathy with him that I can show him his error; to present to him the great

divine reality, which the image indeed suggests, while it yet obscures the God for whom he gropes. My mission to that man is to correct and fulfil his prayer.

Of course, in so doing, elements in this man's religion will be eliminated—yes, even supplanted; but in how different a sense from that con-

Displacement
Not
Violence

templated by a mere contentious attack! This better kind of displacement is a wholly legitimate thing—nay, a necessary thing—if health, instead of disease is to prevail. Does displacement in this sense do violence to anything sacred? True, on the one hand there is an elimination of error; but on the other there is a fulfilment of truth. Every introduction of pure food into the body expels from the circulation baser elements, while it nourishes the vital principle. Then why should he who is the Bread of Life be denied to the spiritually moribund, even though it is certain, in the progress of the new spiritual health, that dead matter will be thrown off?

Such changes as those indicated make possible the ascending order—the true evolution in God's universe.

But we should be dealing superficially with the real issues in this discussion if we did not point out the unique fact that Christianity is more than a school of competitive thought, in the sense that the ethnic faiths are such—something which people are called upon to believe, merely intellectually believe. Christianity is Christ; and he is more than a school of philosophy, a set of opinions. Christ is the essential reality—the Eternal Word, or Reason—at the heart of the universe. He can be experienced and known in every personal soul, irrespective of race distinction. The world and all things therein were created through Christ—on account of Christ, according to Christ; and they are potentially redeemed to him also. Hence the secrets of life and the world can be interpreted to and understood by those only who are in him. Moreover, Christ as such a reality can be experienced only as some-

thing deeper than theoretic beliefs is grasped; only as the whole soul is surrendered to him—intellect, heart, conscience, and will. When man is thus given up to Christ in a vital way, by the divine Spirit, Christ authenticates himself to the human spirit in a wondrous way. He thus approves himself as the final need of man as man. Accordingly he can indwell man, in consonance with any racial peculiarity. Mozoomdar complained that the Christ who had been introduced to India by Western missionaries was an Englishman or a Yankee, whereas he was an Oriental Christ, and more apprehensible by him on that account.¹

Dr. Charles Cuthbert Hall in his late second course of lectures in the East emphasized certain adaptations of the Oriental mind to the experience of Christ—a matter which probably needs to be more regarded in wise missionary endeavor. Although I should be compelled to stop far short of

¹ For such an apprehension, see introduction to Mozoomdar's "The Oriental Christ."

Doctor Hall in his estimate of the characteristic expressions of that mind.

But we do this matter of the extension of Christianity scant justice if we pause with

**A Deep
Imperative
in Missions**

its defense only and merely justify its rights. There is a deep imperative in it. What is this movement of foreign missions? In its simplest form, it is putting down a high type of man alongside a lower one: the planting of such a man as Moffat among the Bechuanas of South Africa, or Paton among the cannibals of the New Hebrides, or Griffith John among the Chinese. Such a personality is a reconstructive force and placed where he is needed. He translates and unfolds the Christian Scriptures to men whose light hitherto has been but as starlight to sunlight; he unveils hitherto hidden relations between the redeeming God and his creatures, who need more than all else to know him, his person, his character, his grace; he puts the languages of rude tribes into writing—one hundred such languages

within a century—and creates new literatures; he brings back the shattered polyglot tribes of men to a better Shinar than that which once witnessed the confusions of Babel. The missionary puts into the hands of men schools, hospitals, and industries. He affords sane treatment to disease, relief to the opium vice, and works a gradual cure of the “open sore of the world.” He abates the evils of Hindu widowhood, gathers thousands of children into orphanages, and unbinds the crippled feet of numberless innocents. All this is more than proselytism, mere sect-making.

Should any think that the work of missions is an arbitrary forcing of issues upon the peoples of heathendom, let him hear Mr. Chester Hol-

Striking
Testimonies

combe, for twenty years connected with the diplomatic staff of the United States in China. In a recent article on the missionary enterprise he thus writes:

To talk to persons who choose to listen; to throw open wide the doors of chapels where

natives who desire may hear the Christian faith explained and urged upon their attention; to sell at half-cost or to give the Bible and Christian literature freely to those who may care to read; to heal the sick without cost; to instruct children whose parents are desirous that they should receive education—surely none of these constitute methods or practices to which the word “force” may be applied, under any allowable use of the English language. . . . There is no difference between the work of pioneer preachers in the far West, that of “settlement workers” in the slums of great cities, or of eloquent pastors of wealthy and fashionable churches in the Back Bay district of Boston, or Fifth Avenue in New York, and that done by missionaries in China. . . . The work is absolutely identical in character and method, differentiated from the others only by simple forms of presentation in order to reach the more effectively minds wholly unfamiliar with the truths presented.

Even as I write, this paragraph of a letter sent from twenty native Christians in the interior of Africa is before me:

We are those who went astray, but the Lord did not leave us. He sought us with perseverance, and we heard his call and answered. Now we are his slaves. We had three teachers. One is in Europe; another has gone to Ikau; and this one who stays with us shortly goes to rest in Europe.

With whom shall we be left? It is good that you should send us teachers who cause us to be full of the words of the Father. We have a desire to hear your teachings of Jehovah God; and we have a desire to see you in the eyes, but we have not the opportunity; we shall have it in heaven.

Does this sound as if missionary effort had wrought any wrong to this people so recently out of fetichism and cannibalism?

If we to-day have no right to plant in India, China, and Africa the seeds of intellectual and moral renewal, then our ancestors, who were pagans in the forests of North Germany, about the lagoons of Holland, and on the moors of Britain, were in egregious error when they set in operation the forces which translated and printed the Bible, founded the universities, promulgated the Magna Charta, brought on the Reformation, and induced the successive migrations from Europe whereby the New World was discovered, peopled, and refashioned into the great, free republic that it is.

The truth is, the Christ of the universe

cannot be himself and fail to do what is involved in his gracious incarnation; nor can his people be themselves as indwelt by him and not extend this incarnation and reenact his gracious deeds. To deny the legitimacy of Christian missions is to deny the right of holy and gracious sovereignty in God, the right to incarnate himself among men, and is to invalidate the legitimacy of all best things in life and history; and that is to legitimize their opposites—to assert the rights of sin and deify its prince.

The final question then, is not whether the Christian church may force arbitrary changes upon a people, but whether, through moral suasion, it may introduce ideas, principles, and potencies that will inevitably bring about wholesome changes for which a people itself in the end will be grateful. Can any one question the benignity of present endeavors in China to overcome the worse by the better? And is not China increasingly friendly to such results? If not,

The
Final
Question

why has the queen dowager abolished the examinations of the old style and introduced instead the new Western education? Why has she discouraged foot binding, promulgated a Sabbath rest-day, and taken steps toward the abolition of the opium curse? Are Chang Chi Tung, author of "China's Only Hope," and Yuen Shih Kai less patriotic because, discerning that the vitalities of Western nations are largely due to modern and Christian thought, they have issued decrees encouraging the millions over whom they rule now to study the new world, including not only the modern sciences, but also Western constitutional government? They have discovered that these Western things are not ethnic, that they are pan-ethnic, and so of course that they are Mongolian. If so, then any displacement they may work will result in the betterment of China. Of course, all this involves overthrow, but legitimate overthrow of the infantine by the mature, of the false by the true, and ultimately of the heathen by the

Christian. For this purpose the world and all its dispensations were made, that through turnings and overturnings the true destinies of mankind consonant with the manifestation of the divine glory, may be realized.

With such aims then, Christian missions are chartered to go anywhere upon this planet, possessing the same right that the Redeemer himself had to come here, and to lay hold of the poor Indian fakir, the wretched superstitious Chinese Boxer, the bestial South Sea cannibal, and every other type of human degradation peculiar to "Satan's castaways," and to set themselves to the task of displacing all error by truth, and bringing men everywhere to their own.

A charter attested as is that of Christian missions, has in it limitless power of self-commendation, and may well seek universal hospitality for its renewing message. Granting that Christianity is a religion possessing the qualities I have claimed for it in the first part of this discussion, can

Christianity
Seeks No
Conquest of
Force

it justify itself in undertaking anything less than the presentation of these values, these potentialities to the whole world? Can it do less than give what it has of the best?

Until recent times, if we except the apostolic period, no system of religion, Oriental or Occidental, as practically held, has allowed itself to make universal effort in behalf of others. The West has been arrayed against the East, and the East against the West, in a mutual exclusiveness of suspicion that one or the other must wholly triumph or wholly succumb to the mastery of the other. As a mark of this attitude, recall the noteworthy work of Meredith Townsend on "Asia and Europe." Large place is given in this book to the question whether or not Europe is likely to conquer Asia. The deeper question to which Mr. Townsend does little justice is this: Has Europe, has Christendom, the moral power—the motive—to bless the world in such a way that neither Europe nor Asia will desire any conquest, but one of love and grace?

President Charles Cuthbert Hall (now translated) lately returned from his second visit to the far East. On this **Political Embarrassments** visit he had rare opportunity to feel the moral pulse of India, China, and Japan. In a recent address, given before the American Board of Commissioners in Cleveland, he expressed the strong conviction which all Western travelers in those lands must share, that one of the chief hindrances to missionary endeavor is an embarrassment which springs out of the political situation. A great multitude in all those lands continue to stand outside the missionary community because, however worthy they deem the enterprise of missions in itself to be, they do not feel free to identify themselves with a movement which is after all managed by Europeans, or at the least by foreigners. This foreigner is feared, whether he comes from Britain, from France, from Germany, from Russia, or even from the United States.

Many Orientals who are secretly in

sympathy with the Lord Jesus Christ, and with the best things represented by the Christian community, are still loth to be known as Christians, because in so doing they would be identified by their countrymen with foreigners and with various forms of foreign abuses. These abuses have repeatedly stung their proud spirits, and as Orientals conscious of great histories, extending over millenniums of time behind them, they do not easily forget those disgraceful chapters in the treatment accorded to their fathers by Western adventurers and freebooters. These influences, together with a fair modicum of race prejudice, common to man, hold Orientals back from a committal to a religion which is offered them from the West, although the religion itself is really distinctively Eastern.

There is great pertinency in the point raised by Doctor Hall, a point which Mr. Townsend in his book might well have considered with real magnanimity. Nevertheless, the fact remains that Christianity in

itself, in its essential purity, disconnected from things European which may have prejudiced it, is the hope of the world, because it is a religion really neither Eastern nor Western, but human, pan-ethnic; and as such there is in it innate capacity to bring the manhood of both hemispheres, and of all races into conformity to the character of God as seen in his Son Jesus Christ; and so also into one broad spiritual communion.

From this point of view, if the positions laid down in the preceding pages are sound,

The Benign
Purpose
of Missions

the matter of mere physical or racial conquest as between any two peoples, is wholly irrelevant. The question at the bottom is: Has any people on the globe a message of such benignity, that if it were communicated to all the races of the world, it would result in a federation of mankind, a federation deeper than the mere brotherhood of man; such a federation as would eventually be a communion of saints? It is our firm belief ✓✓

that Christianity has, nay, that Christ himself is, that message.

The work of foreign missions up to this time, and especially during the past century, has been that of blazing the path to the discovery of ways and means whereby humanity may get together and find its real salvation, salvation in every sense. Grant that in the efforts made some blunders have occurred; that the means employed have been inadequate; even that little more than the sowing of the seed of the coming of the kingdom of God has been accomplished. Yet the effort has been an earnest one, a sincere one, and on the whole an effective one. The humblest inquirers in this realm are those who have labored hardest and sacrificed most to get their message understood among the idolatrous and agnostic races. Our contention, however, is that nothing less than has been done could have been done, and the Christian church have remained really Christian, or really human, and particularly in the face of the great provi-

dential changes that have occurred in the mighty East within the past half-century. The reason why Christianity could not have done less is precisely this: That when understood, Christianity has in it such elements as we have noted, elements in themselves of untold value, and universally applicable to mankind. Like Paul, its great exponent, it holds these spiritual values in trust for others who are in need.

To recapitulate: Christianity holds the supreme conception of *the oneness of mankind*; it alone cherishes the
 Recapitulation idea of *a redemptive purpose*—a cure for sin—at the heart of God; it places a premium upon *the faith principle conceived as loyalty to present light*; it is the one religion which *centers in a unique divine-human person*; it alone guarantees *human well-being in providence* irrespective of outward, circumstantial conditions; and it affords the only practical *hope of god-like character* and final blessedness like his own.

The ideal of all we plead for is concretely presented in the New Testament picture of our Lord's transfiguration.

This transfiguration is really ^{Moral} Transfiguration the Ideal the archetypal form of that

characteristic work of redemption wherein mankind and all that belongs to him are to be transformed into the same glory which Christ himself exhibited in the holy mount. The scene is best understood when viewed in contrast with another scene, viz., that in the plain, just following it.

Two types of sonship are presented: That of Jesus in the glory ensuing upon his full acceptance of his impending cross, concerning which the Father, speaking right out of the blue, exclaimed: "This is my Son, my chosen"—"the ideal potentiality I cherish for all men, what I mean by sonship." The other type is seen in the child of a broken-hearted earthly father whom the disciples through default in prayer had failed to heal. This was a son of the natural man—the limited human father—plus all

the damage sin and the demon had wrought in him. He was "lunatic," torn by the spirit, fallen at the Saviour's feet "as one dead"; he "wallowed, foaming." There he lay, a devil's masterpiece—sin in the death-process. The acme of distress uttered itself in the father's cry: "I beseech thee, look upon my son; for he is mine only child"—literally, mine "only begotten"; the same word that describes the relation of Jesus to his Father. How different the fatherhoods, and how unlike the sonships, in these contrasting pictures! Now, all this may be regarded as a dramatization of the task of Christ's successors in this sinful world. This task is naught less than to take human souls stricken and damaged by sin, and to begin to transfigure them—to change them from prostrate, sin-cursed, earthly sonship to radiant, glorified, heavenly sonship like Christ's own, idealized in that mount.

This transfiguration was not for Christ alone. He is but "the firstborn of many brethren." The transfiguration was for all

men and for all theirs. It is for the poor Indian fakir, the crazed superstitious Chinese Boxer, the gross South Sea cannibal, the barbarous African savage, and the just as needy, though polished, Anglo-Saxon agnostic. This transfiguration amounts to salvation—Christian salvation, the only salvation worthy of God and of ourselves. Moreover, this salvation can never be adequately known or consciously realized apart from that wisdom and power which are lodged in the cross of Christ and its gospel. To bring such a salvation to men the Christian church not only has the right, but is bound, in the appropriate “times and seasons,” to go everywhere upon this planet where the Redeemer himself would come. This warrant and duty are the charter of the Christian church; the right to love where others hate, to cherish where others neglect, to bless where others curse, to offer felicity in this world and the world to come where others consign to darkness and despair. This is the right divine, the redemptive right

to communicate the grace of Christian missions. There is then a divine right of missions; and if so, a human right also to propagate them, as the human right becomes conformed to the divine.



Appendix

Extraordinary Aboriginal Traditions

THE day we received the first Muhso for baptism, two teachers of this tribe from China, together with about sixty followers, came to the compound. They said: "We have been traveling for fourteen years preaching to the Muhsos to turn from all evil and follow after righteousness, because the true God is coming soon."¹ They said they had been searching for the true God for years, and had just found him. Five days later another Muhso teacher came with a large following, and the first two men came back also. The interest was most profound. The people seemed intensely in earnest and every one professed to believe fully

¹ Extract from a report from Rev. W. M. Young, missionary of the American Baptist Missionary Union, Kengtung, Burma.

the message that we gave them. They then told us the Muhso traditions. They are very similar to the Karen traditions, and in some respects they are even clearer. Their account of the creation, the fall, and the flood, corresponds very closely with the biblical account; and their teaching against evil-doing corresponds with remarkable accuracy to the Ten Commandments of the Mosaic law. They give more precepts, but the teaching is almost identical; they say God once dwelt among men, that he has gone away, but that he is coming again, and those who refuse to receive his truth will be cast into hell, Ma Na Hok, when he comes. The belief seems well-nigh universal among them that the foreigner would bring them the knowledge of the true God, and there is an intense longing on the part of many for such a revelation.

About six years ago they began to build small chapels in which they met on new and full moons to worship, and these are now found in hundreds of towns. The Muhsos had

certain paper offerings and paper streamers, offerings of popped rice, the burning of tapers, etc., which they said indicated two things: that they implored the protection of God, and also expressed the longing of their hearts for a knowledge of the true God. They said the foreigner would soon come to teach them. They also wore cotton cords about their wrists and in some cases about the neck. These were, first, a pledge that they would not forsake the Muhso customs of belief in one God, or drink liquor, or follow after any evil; and, secondly, the cords expressed the longing that the foreigner would come and teach them the knowledge of the true God, and then he would cut them from their wrists. When I visited the first villages where they had the chapels, they voluntarily carried all the offerings out, saying: "We have now found the true God and have no further need of these." The Muhso teacher came to me in the presence of all the people of the village and said: "We have now found the true God; you

cut these cords from my wrists." I did so, and every person in the village came at once and I cut all their cords. That meant a complete break from the past customs, and a full and complete acceptance of the new teaching. They accepted every Christian precept that I presented to them; and then, after a unanimous vote, we held a formal service dedicating the chapel to the Lord. Since then I have cut the cords from the wrists of hundreds of people.

Some things are very remarkable about these simple mountain people. They are pure monotheists and do not believe in or make offerings to evil spirits; they are less bound by superstitions than any other tribe of Burma; in some sections they are addicted to drunkenness, but this is strictly forbidden by their tribal customs; they are pure monogamists, polygamy not being tolerated. Some say they would punish a polygamist or bigamist with death, while others say he would be driven from the village. My Karen helpers say the Muhsos will make

better Christians than the Karens because of this freedom from superstitions; and then they are naturally of a more teachable spirit.

It is certain that this Muhso population is much larger, probably several times larger, in China than in Kentung. I have the names of eighteen local States in China where the Muhsos and Kwes dwell, some of which States it is said, are larger than Kengtung. It gives an immense field for work, which undoubtedly must be enlarged to the north and northeast as soon as possible, since it is certain now that thousands will accept Christ as soon as the gospel can be clearly presented to them.



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